

June 15, 2006

To the Editor:

It's never too late to become the best 'you' that there is, especially academically. That's what hundreds of our area residents keep in mind each year as they bravely take and pass the high school equivalency exam, or GED test. Some have dropped out of high school decades earlier, never having received a diploma. Others are still teenagers whose life circumstances have made them wait a bit longer than "normal" to graduate.

To honor their achievement, Parkland College hosted the annual GED Graduation Ceremony on the evening of June 13. Many of the awardees, their families and friends, attended this year's ceremony. The GED Graduation Ceremony is a joyous event, one that demonstrates the commitment and determination of the recipients to gain a high school equivalency award by successfully completing a test that assesses their critical thinking skills, ability to analyze data, write a five paragraph essay, and answer and solve algebra and geometry questions.

Adults who earn a GED can apply for federal financial aid and continue their post secondary education. Post secondary education is necessary for most jobs that pay a living wage, a necessity for gainful employment in our increasingly complex and technologically advanced society. An educated workforce is essential for the prosperity of the residents in Parkland's district, the State of Illinois, and our country. The skills of our workforce will be the determining factor in our ability to compete in an increasingly global economy.

Parkland College is committed to increasing the literacy and workforce skills of the residents in East Central Illinois. GED preparation classes are free of charge and are offered on campus and at several district sites. GED on-line, an internet based GED preparation program, is a resource for adults who cannot attend classes because of work, distance, or family commitments. For more information about these programs and additional literacy and workforce education services, please contact the Adult Education/Literacy Center at Parkland College, 217/351-2580.

Sincerely

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